

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion defining a first longitudinal axis and a proximal portion defining a second longitudinal axis, the second longitudinal axis being disposed at an angle to the first longitudinal axis;

a needle hub affixed to the needle; and

a shield including a proximal segment and a distal segment, the proximal segment having a first end pivotally connected to the needle hub and a second end pivotally connected to a first end of the distal segment, the distal segment having a second end pivotally connected to a planar contact surface, the planar contact surface including a needle linear bearing, the needle linear bearing defining a throughbore having a diameter that is substantially equal to an external diameter of the needle, the needle linear bearing facilitating ~~that slidably engages the needle to facilitate~~ movement of the needle relative to the shield, the shield being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position via fixed positioning of the planar contact surface relative to movement of the shield wherein the needle and the shield are movable in relation to the needle linear bearing.

Claim 2 (Previously presented): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the needle hub is configured to support the proximal portion of the needle.

Claim 3 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the needle hub includes an appendage.

Claim 4 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the appendage has at least one opening to facilitate manipulation thereof.

Claim 5 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the appendage has at least one wing for manipulation thereof.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the distal portion of the needle is angularly displaced approximately 90 degrees from the proximal portion of the needle.

Claim 8 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the planar contact surface includes a pad for engagement with a subject.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the shield includes a latch engageable with the needle.

Claim 12 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the latch includes a latch arm for maintaining the shield in the extended position.

Claim 13 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the latch includes a plurality of surfaces configured to maintain the shield in the extended position.

Claim 14 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the latch includes an arcuate surface engageable with the needle.

Claims 15-32 (Canceled).

Claim 33 (Previously presented): A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion defining a longitudinal axis which is angularly displaced relative to a longitudinal axis defined by a proximal portion of the needle; and

a shield including at least one elongated part, the shield having a proximal end mounted with the proximal portion of the needle and a distal end mounted with a planar contact surface, the planar contact surface including a plurality of openings and a needle linear bearing that slidably engages the needle to facilitate movement of the needle relative to the shield, the shield being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position via fixed positioning of the planar contact surface relative to movement of the shield.

Claim 34 (Canceled).

Claim 35 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 33, wherein the planar contact surface includes an anchor part.

Claim 36 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 33, wherein the distal end of the shield is hingedly attached to the planar contact surface.

Claim 37 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 33, wherein the planar contact surface includes a pad for engagement with a subject.

Claim 38 (Currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion defining a longitudinal axis which is angularly displaced relative to a longitudinal axis defined by a proximal portion of the needle; and

a shield means, mounted with the needle and extensible between a retracted position and an extended position, for preventing hazardous exposure to the distal portion of the needle, the

shield means having a planar body contacting surface, the planar body contacting surface including a needle linear bearing that slidably engages the needle to facilitate movement of the needle relative to the shield via fixed positioning of the planar contact surface relative to movement of the shield, the needle linear bearing defining a throughbore having an internal diameter which is substantially equal to an external diameter of the needle, the needle and shield means being movable in relation to the needle linear bearing.

Claim 39 (Original): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 38, further comprising a latch means engageable with the needle for maintaining the shield means in the extended position.

Claim 40 (Previously presented): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the planar contact surface includes texturing.

Claim 41 (Previously presented): A safety shield apparatus according to Claim 38, wherein the planar body contacting surface is integrally formed with the needle linear bearing.